

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW FEES FOR CAMPING AT POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

Backcountry camping at Point Reyes has been a special experience for residents and visitors of the San Francisco Bay Area for over 30 years. Many of our longtime campers have been frustrated by the increasing difficulty in making camping reservations. Over the past ten years, use of the campgrounds have steadily increased. The backcountry sites now see over 25,000 camper nights per year. The cost of trash collection, permit processing, and maintaining the trails continues to rise.

Point Reyes will be charging fees for use of the backcountry campgrounds. Beginning July 1, 1997, the cost will be \$10.00 per campsite per night for up to eight people. Group fees will be \$30.00 per site per night up to 25 people. These fees were determined by looking at comparable facilities at local, state, and regional campgrounds.

Because of increased visitor use and rising operating costs, Point Reyes National Seashore has been selected to participate in a new fee collection program. The Congressionally authorized Recreation Fee Demonstration Program directed three agencies, including the National Park Service, to implement a pilot fee program in order to augment the park's appropriated operating budget by increasing or creating new fees in a manner which spreads costs for managing these lands among those who use them.

Under this fee demonstration program, parks will be allowed to collect new or increased fees for 1997 through 1999 and the revenues can be spent before 2002. Each park, like Point Reyes National Seashore, that participates in the program will be allowed to keep 80% of all new fees collected; the remaining 20% from new fees will be deposited in a special account for visitor service improvements in other park units.

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The revenue generated in the park will help Point Reyes National Seashore improve customer service by adding a dedicated camping line and increase our reservation hours. Funds will also be used for park projects such as, trailhead construction, campground rehabilitation, trail maintenance, and resource management.

Beginning May 1, 1997, reservations for Point Reyes National Seashore backcountry campsites can be made up to two months in advance. For example, on May 1 we will take reservations for no later than July 1. Reservations can be made over the phone at our new campground reservation number **(415) 663-8054, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm.** In person, reservations can be made anytime the Bear Valley Visitor Center is open, within the two month window. Fees will be collected at the time the reservation is made. We will accept credit cards over the phone. In person, payments can be cash, check or charge. The fees are for camping July 1 and thereafter.

Your feedback is important to us during this three year demonstration project, therefore, we encourage visitor comments. At the end of the program, Congress will evaluate this program and determine whether to extend it.

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